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Letter dated 13 February 2007 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I write in my capacity as Chairman of the Security Council Working Group on children and armed conflict established by resolution 1612 (2005).

At its 7th meeting, on 9 February 2007, the Working Group adopted its conclusions with respect to the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2006/835).

I should be grateful if this text could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jean-Marc **de La Sablière**

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Annex to the letter dated 13 February 2007 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English]

Security Council Working Group on children and armed conflict Conclusions on Côte d'Ivoire

1. At its 6th meeting, on 8 November 2006, the Working Group examined a report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire participated in the subsequent discussion.

2. The main elements of the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group were as follows:

- The report of the Secretary-General and the close engagement of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UNICEF and ONUCI with all parties on the ground were welcomed.
- Concern was expressed at incidents of grave child rights violations as identified in the Secretary-General's report, including killing, maiming, and the use and abduction of and trafficking in children by parties to armed conflict.
- Persistent incidents of rape and other sexual violence against girls was a cause of grave disturbance.
- Grave concern was expressed that these serious violations committed against children are generally not investigated or prosecuted.
- The recent commitments made by the Forces nouvelles and several self-defence militias in western Côte d'Ivoire, through the recent signing of action plans to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers, were commended.
- The responsibility of the Ivorian authorities to engage other armed groups under their control to enter in a similar dialogue was underlined.
- The Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire underlined that only non-governmental forces or pro-governmental self-defence militias had been involved in the recruitment and use of child soldiers. He agreed on the necessity of further identification of those militias and said that cooperation between them and the National Programme of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration should be encouraged. Côte d'Ivoire would ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict as soon as possible.

3. Further to that meeting and subject to and consistent with applicable international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1612 (2005), the Working Group has agreed to recommend the following to the Security Council:

(a) Letter from the President of the Security Council to the Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire welcoming the steps taken to ratify the Optional Protocol to the

Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and requesting:

(i) That he makes concrete commitments and takes action to halt and prevent grave violations against children, including through an impartial, transparent and timely investigation of all grave violations of the rights of children with a view to prosecuting their perpetrators;

(ii) That he cooperates with ONUCI and UNICEF in identifying self-defence militias and that he urges those militias to sign action plans to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers, while recalling the Security Council's demand for an immediate resumption of the programme for the disarmament and dismantling of militias throughout the national territory, stressing that this programme is a key element of the peace process and underlining the individual responsibility of the leaders of the militias in the full implementation of this process;

(iii) That those responsible for the implementation of the National Programme of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration fully cooperate with ONUCI and UNICEF to that end;

(iv) That he speeds up the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in order to facilitate the speedy reintegration of children in their families;

(v) That he puts a regional monitoring mechanism in place in cooperation with the neighbouring States to make sure that during the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process no children are recruited by other rebel groups;

(vi) That he supports and assists in programmes aimed at rehabilitating former child soldiers as well as in the rehabilitation of children affected by the conflict.

(b) Letter from the President of the Security Council to the President of Côte d'Ivoire requesting:

(i) That he makes concrete commitments and takes action to halt and prevent grave violations against children;

(ii) To that end, that he cooperates with ONUCI and UNICEF in identifying still existing self-defence militias.

(c) Letter from the President of the Security Council to the Chairpersons of the International Working Group to the Mediator and to his representative in Côte d'Ivoire encouraging them to promote regular dialogue between the Government and all parties to the conflict in order to find ways and means of dealing with the problem of displaced children, child soldiers and child prostitution.

(d) Letter from the President of the Security Council inviting the African Union Peace and Security Council to devote increasing attention to the conclusion and implementation by all parties to the armed conflict of action plans to halt the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

(e) Letter from the President of the Security Council to the Secretary-General:

(i) Welcoming the intention of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to visit Côte d'Ivoire;

(ii) Requesting that he provides in his next report to the Security Council on children and armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire a list, with supporting evidence, of those individuals involved in armed conflict who are suspected of systematically committing grave violations against children, as background documentation, for possible consideration by the Security Council, without prejudging the decisions of the Security Council or the Committee established pursuant to paragraph 14 of resolution 1572 (2004), of future targeted measures in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions.

4. The Working Group has also agreed to the following direct action:

(a) Letter from the Chairman of the Security Council Working Group to the Secretary-General of the Forces nouvelles:

(i) Urging him to live up to the commitments made in the framework of action plans to halt recruitment and use of child soldiers and to allow for regular in situ verification by the United Nations of their implementation;

(ii) Urging him to rigorously investigate crimes and abuses against children and to refer them in a timely fashion to UNICEF, ONUCI and Ivorian child protection authorities;

(iii) Pending the restoration of the administration of justice system, requesting continued dissemination of the command order of 30 April 2006 instructing an end to the illegal detention of children, while referring in a timely fashion to the relevant United Nations child protection officers alleged cases of serious crimes committed by children.

(b) Letter from the Chairman of the Working Group to the leaders of FLGO, APWé, UPRGO and MILOCI:

(i) Recalling the Security Council's demand for an immediate resumption of the programme for the disarmament and dismantling of militias throughout the national territory, stressing that this programme is a key element of the peace process and underlining their individual responsibility in the full implementation of this process;

(ii) In the meantime, urging them to live up to the commitments made in the framework of action plans to halt recruitment and use of child soldiers and to allow for regular in situ verification by the United Nations of their implementation.

(c) Letter from the Chairman of the Working Group to the World Bank and donors to request timely and adequate capacity and resources for reintegration programmes for demobilized children, with due consideration to the longer-term requirements of such programmes for children.

(d) Letter from the Chairman of the Working Group to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations commending the Department's efforts in the follow-up to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) and subsequent presidential statements, and requesting:

(i) In close consultation with UNICEF, continued dialogue of ONUCI with the Forces nouvelles, FLGO, APWé, UPRGO and MILOCI for implementation of the existing action plans to halt the recruitment and use of child soldiers;

(ii) Further strengthening of the ONUCI child protection capacity, within its existing mandates.

(e) Letter from the Chairman of the Working Group to UNICEF commending the UNICEF efforts in the follow-up to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) and subsequent presidential statements, and requesting, in close consultation with ONUCI, continued dialogue with and support to the Forces nouvelles, FLGO, APWé, UPRGO and MILOCI for implementation of the existing action plans to halt the recruitment and use of child soldiers.